

NOSB Handling Committee Recommendation

Use of Albumen in Winemaking Q&A

January 19, 2005

Introduction

The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) has requested the NOSB to provide recommended guidance concerning a question regarding the use of albumen in winemaking. The NOP can review and distribute this recommendation to accredited certifying agents and post on the NOP website.

Background

A question has been presented to the National Organic Program (NOP) for explanation regarding the use of albumen in the clarification process during organic wine-making under the current NOP regulations. Albumen, from egg whites, is a common fining (clarifying) agent in wine making. It acts as a binding agent that attracts yeast, tannins and other debris and then sinks to the bottom. The clear wine is then removed leaving the fining agent and solids behind.

The NOP has forwarded this question to the NOSB for recommended guidance.

Specific Questions

Is albumen allowed for use in the clarification process during organic wine-making under the current NOP regulations?

Recommendation

The NOSB handling committee recommends that the ingredient, albumen, needs to be petitioned.

Rationale

Without a petition and technical review not enough information has been provided to determine if albumen is agricultural or nonagricultural, or, if agricultural, if it might be commercially available in an organic form.

Section 205.105(c) prohibits the use of “nonagricultural substances used in or on processed products, except as otherwise provided in 205.605, and 205.105.” Section 205.105(d) prohibits the use of “nonorganic agricultural substances used in or on processed products, except as otherwise provided in 205.606.” Because "albumen" does not appear on the National List, it must be petitioned.

Committee Vote:

Yes – 5
No – 0

Abstain – 0
Absent - 1